

4.0 GROWTH AREA ELEMENT

The *Growth Area Element* of the **Sedona Community Plan** is presented in the following sections:

4.1 KEY ISSUES

- *“Infill” Policy And Urban Limits*
- *Focused Activity Centers - Development/Re-Development*
- *West Sedona Commercial Corridor – Development/Re-Development*

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Goals and Objectives*
- *On-going Growth Management Guidelines*

4.3 ACTION PROGRAM

Overview

The *Growth Area Element* is mandated by the Growing Smarter legislation to require communities to identify land development patterns that do not promote urban sprawl, but “provide for a rational pattern of land development”. The legislation also specifies the inclusion of policies and strategies that promote efficiency of multimodal transportation and cost-effective infrastructure improvements in the support of a wide variety of land uses and the conservation of open space within growth areas.

The City of Sedona is completely surrounded by the Coconino National Forest and 49% of the land area within the incorporated boundaries of the City is National Forest land.

Based on current densities, zoning and development trends, Sedona’s private land base can support a total population of approximately 17,100 (15,700 year-round and 1,400 seasonal residents), including about 8,780 housing units on 3,900 acres of residential land. In July 2001, 62% of the residential land area and 72% of the commercial land area was built out. Excluding National Forest lands, approximately 72% of the City’s land area was developed in July 2001. By the year 2015, the commercial areas will likely be built out and by 2019, the residential areas will likely be totally developed.



4.1 KEY ISSUES

Infill Policies and Urban Limits

One of the City's key goals is to prohibit urban sprawl by retaining the existing geographic limits of the private lands within the City. The City has long maintained a policy of building out the existing private land base without expanding into National Forest lands. The US Forest Service maintains similar policies reflected in the Coconino National Forest Plan for the Sedona area (see *Open Space Element* – Amendment 12 to the USFS Plan). These policies are further supported in a regional context through resolutions adopted by Verde Valley communities and Yavapai County. Common regional planning goals include maintaining significant open spaces between communities and along highway corridors and providing distinct boundaries, or “edges” to the urban environment.

The Sedona community remains committed to exploring development and re-development options that meet the community's needs without making major changes to its total commercial and residential land base.

The City could evaluate annexation options that may provide for City development review/zoning authority and needed infrastructure on existing private lands currently outside the City limits.

Policies and strategies regarding annexation could be developed to ensure that the City can proactively plan for future growth scenarios beyond its current boundaries. Alternative strategies could be developed as part of the City's strategic planning process to address:

- \$ Expansion of City services and infrastructure including the potential mitigation of environmental impacts.
- \$ Providing City planning policies, development review and zoning authority on private lands in the Sedona area.
- \$ Open space issues and needs

However, any future evaluation of policies and strategies regarding annexation must also consider the potential effect on current US Forest Service policies and management practices and potential inconsistencies with City growth policies outlined in the Community Plan.

This discussion is not an endorsement of annexation.

Focused Activity Centers – Development/Re-Development

“Focused Activity Centers” (FAC's) are provided in the Community Plan to denote areas where the greatest diversity of land uses (including visitor-based uses) exist or can be developed that are or will be served by the most efficient traffic circulation and other infrastructure improvements. These active centers are also intended to provide the highest level of pedestrian mobility between

the broadest range of uses and have the greatest potential to be served by future transit. These areas of mixed activity are also more conducive to vehicular trips oriented to a single destination resulting in fewer highway trips. There are four FAC's in west Sedona and one encompassing much of the Uptown area (see *Land Use Element*).

The challenges associated with the FAC's, particularly in light of high commercial land costs, include:

- \$ Finding incentives to promote more residential development (mixed commercial residential use)
- \$ Maintaining a diversity of commercial uses
- \$ Providing more public spaces and open space
- \$ Encouraging greater pedestrian activity
- \$ Coordination of design/development themes

West Sedona Commercial Corridor – Development/Re-Development

Throughout the west Sedona commercial corridor, the areas between the FAC's are identified for commercial land uses that should be oriented more to the needs of local residents. Offices and a variety of residential services that are lower traffic generators than many retail uses are recommended for these areas where traffic management may also be more problematic. Locally-oriented businesses will generally require less highway visibility and parking, resulting in greater opportunities to provide an attractive commercial corridor (see *Land Use Element*).

There are several challenges associated with the commercial corridor, including:

- \$ Lack of a detailed inventory and analysis of community needs
- \$ Lack of incentives to encourage establishment of uses that meet local needs and that are consistent with the character of the community. Very high commercial land costs tend to provide disincentives toward development of many uses. Some commercial uses may meet local needs but are inconsistent with community character. Current development standards, for example, generally promote small-scale structures, multiple building masses, parking to the rear of buildings, extensive landscaping and specific design components that discourage large-scale commercial developments (see *Land Use Element*).
- \$ Providing more public spaces and open space
- \$ Encouraging greater pedestrian activity
- \$ Coordination of design/development themes

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Vision, Goals and Objectives/Policies

GROWTH AREA VISION

Promote infill and prohibit sprawl by providing a rational pattern of land development, utilizing the existing private land base to meet the needs of Sedona's population once this land base is built out.

GOAL 1.0 Retain the existing geographic limits of the private and municipal lands within the City.

Objectives/Policies

- 1.1 Support the policy of Amendment 12 of the Coconino National Forest Plan that does not allow for the disposal of National Forest lands within or adjacent to the City except for the Chapel, the current USFS headquarters, public uses of up to 10 acres or for resolution of encroachment issues. Identify specific public/semi-public needs and infrastructure through City/community/USFS coordination and cooperation that could be considered by the USFS in accordance with this policy or as a limited exception to this policy.
- 1.2 Support regional policies that maintain significant open space between communities and along highway corridors and that provide distinct urban boundaries.

GOAL 2.0 Limit the impact of growth on the area's natural resources by preserving a small-town environment for Sedona's citizens and visitors.

Objectives/Policies

- 2.1 Within the City's existing private land base, limit future residential growth to the total number of housing units that can be accommodated once this private land base is built out at the densities generally established upon the City's incorporation as recommended in the *Sedona Community Plan's Future Land Use Map*.
- 2.2 Do not expand the current commercial area beyond what was generally existing upon the City's incorporation unless supported by adopted specific area plans or where specifically provided on a limited basis to address specific community needs.

GOAL 3.0 Provide a rational pattern of land development in key areas where future growth policies can have the greatest effect on meeting community needs.

Objectives/Policies

- 3.1 Support the development and re-development of the existing commercial area consistent with the desired character and needs of the community.
- 3.2 Evaluate commercial and other land use needs that will support the projected residential population at buildout and identify appropriate locations for these uses consistent with other community growth objectives and the *Sedona Community Plan's Future Land Use Map*.
- 3.3 Provide for concentrated, mixed use commercial, lodging and residential development ("Focused Activity Centers") within compact, defined areas in west Sedona with specific character and design themes to promote greater neighborhood and visitor pedestrian/bicycle use, concentrated and coordinated parking, future transit access, pedestrian/bike path linkages and greater opportunities for social interaction.
- 3.4 Evaluate uses appropriate for locations between "Focused Activity Centers" within the highway commercial districts in west Sedona, including those with lower trip generation to reduce congestion and commercial strip appearance and to provide optimal integration of landscaping, open space and pedestrian linkages.
- 3.5 Support the development of community character districts for both commercial and residential areas that will preserve historic and cultural character and heritage, encourage community-oriented uses, promote development of public gathering places and public art and create a sense of community identity.
- 3.6 Support the re-vitalization of the Uptown area as a specific character district and encourage community-oriented uses such as the Jordan Historic Park and pedestrian, streetscape and roadway improvements that will contribute to a sense of quality, more attractive to both residents and visitors.
- 3.7 Provide transitions between residential areas and commercial uses and the highway corridor to address specific area needs, buffering of incompatible uses, community benefits and preservation of open space. Encourage the retention and enhancement of commercial uses which are compatible with adjacent land uses and respect the existing positive characteristics of the City and its natural environment.

4.2.2 On-going Growth Management Guidelines

The following policies/guidelines should be used in the future monitoring of community growth:

- \$ The City should provide on-going monitoring of residential densities and number of housing units developed in all land use categories to evaluate consistency with Land Use projections and growth management goals. Monitoring should also include a case-by-case assessment of proposed project densities/units vs. city-wide densities/units projected under current zoning.
- \$ The City should update the **Sedona Community Plan** every five years to assess population growth, as confirmed by actual census data, relative to past projects and the City's ability to provide services and mitigate development impacts. Additional management steps could be considered if total housing unit increase exceeds 790 units per five years (based on mid-range forecast).
- \$ The City should establish a baseline of commercial and specific use acreage (general) based on the *Future Land Use Map* and monitor developed/ undeveloped acres on an on-going basis.
- \$ The City should communicate with property owners regarding goals, objectives, development criteria and desired uses both independent of development proposals and during the development review process.
- \$ Future community facilities and services should be located based on accepted service area standards, public transportation access, linkages to the entire community via a pedestrian pathway network and the ability to host a multitude of public activities and events.
- \$ A linked open space and parks system should be established, emphasizing access via non-motorized modes of transportation and linkages to other community facilities and services. Integrate this system with that of the US Forest Service in a compatible manner that protects National Forest assets, and minimizes potential environmental degradation.

4.3 ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program for the *Growth Area Element* of the **Sedona Community Plan** lists the specific action necessary to implement the Community Plan.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should review and provide recommendations to the City Council for revising the following Action Program on an annual basis in order to continue to pursue implementation of the **Sedona Community Plan** in an expeditious manner and to coincide with the annual strategic planning and Flexible Capital Budget process.

Future Actions

1. Prepare a comprehensive evaluation of commercial land use needs at buildout. Identify land uses that should be retained and/or promoted.
2. Create a comprehensive inventory of commercial businesses throughout Sedona.
3. Survey and interview residents and businesses regarding commercial/ community needs in the community.
4. Re-evaluate the Phase One West Sedona Commercial Corridor Study relative to the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Sedona Community Plan and adopt as a Specific Area Plan. Specific Area Planning is needed to better understand the appropriate balance of commercial retail and services and visitor-based uses. Specific Area planning can also guide future Plan amendments and zoning actions that may be necessary to implement the recommendations.
5. Identify uses that are incompatible with an attractive highway corridor
6. Select signature parcels along the highway that should be developed with community/locally-oriented uses and/or preserved as open space.
7. Create clear incentives for development/re-development including mixed commercial/residential uses and prioritize areas for re-development.
8. Clarify desired land uses within Focused Activity Centers and between these centers. Identify locations for these uses.
9. Provide more uses that meet the needs of the residents.
10. Adopt an Uptown Overlay Zoning District to address design and development standards, including lot coverage, parking, setbacks and other standards and recommend improvements to enhance as a character district.

11. Create clear incentives to provide more residentially-oriented uses in Uptown in conjunction with additional specific area planning programs for the Uptown/Creek area.
12. Amend existing commercial zoning districts to be consistent with specific area plans and evaluate the creation of separate zoning districts to provide specific, needed uses consistent with Plan goals.
13. Remove undesirable and unsupported uses from commercial zones.
14. Evaluate and possibly amend commercial zones to allow locally-supported commercial uses that are incompatible with the highway corridor to be located in commercial zones off the highway.
15. Adopt overlay districts for Focused Activity Centers and standards for areas between FAC's.

On-going/In-Process:

- \$ Complete Shuttle Transit Feasibility Study. Evaluate specific implementation needs based on the results.